

## Braley Announces \$22.3 Billion Disaster Relief Package Passes House

Today the US House of Representatives passed a \$22.3 billion disaster relief package to aid families, businesses and communities affected by the floods and tornadoes in Iowa and other disasters. This domestic disaster relief package, which was considered as part of a funding bill, passed the House with Braley's support on a vote of 370-58.

Washington, DC -Today the US House of Representatives passed a \$22.3 billion disaster relief package to aid families, businesses and communities affected by the floods and tornadoes in Iowa and other disasters. This domestic disaster relief package, which was considered as part of a funding bill, passed the House with Braley's support on a vote of 370-58.

"I'm pleased the House passed additional Iowa disaster relief, which is long overdue," Braley said. "I hope this funding will quickly pass into law so Iowans will have the resources they need to continue rebuilding from the floods and tornadoes. I will continue working to cut through the bureaucratic red-tape to ensure that promised funding reaches Iowans without delay."

Included in the \$22.3 billion domestic disaster relief package is \$7.9 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), \$6.5 billion for Community Development Block Grants, \$400 million for the Economic Development Administration, and \$20 million for railroad rehabilitation and repair. This package is far larger than the \$5-6 billion supported by the Bush Administration.

This funding is in addition to the \$2.65 billion passed by the House in June.

Earlier today, Braley spoke on the floor in support of this disaster relief passage. A copy of Braley's floor statement is attached.

The disaster relief package now moves on to the Senate for consideration.

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PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2638, CONSOLIDATED SECURITY, DISASTER ASSISTANCE, AND CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2009

Statement of Rep. Braley (IA-01)

(House of Representatives - September 23, 2008)

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the passage of \$22.3 billion in domestic disaster relief. This is critical funding which will help my State of Iowa make a full recovery from the unprecedented natural disasters that hit our State this summer.

I have been working hard to secure this funding for months now, ever since my district was ravaged by record floods and tornadoes which destroyed farms and businesses and displaced thousands of Iowans.

I am especially pleased that this disaster relief package includes \$6.5 billion in community development block grant funding which will provide devastated communities with the flexible grants they need to provide temporary housing, repair and replace damaged homes and public infrastructure, and fund critical economic development activities.

I am also pleased that the package includes \$7.9 billion for FEMA disaster relief funds which will help ensure that FEMA can continue its work helping communities recover from recent disasters, and provide the resources necessary to respond to future disasters.

In addition to the damage to homes, schools, hospitals, businesses and cropland, Iowa also experienced serious infrastructure damages, including damage to numerous railroad bridges like the one here in downtown Waterloo that is pictured to my right.

I fought very hard to repair and replace this damaged rail infrastructure, so I am glad that my efforts have paid off in this bill with funding that includes \$20 million to fund the repair and replacement of damaged bridges, tracks and other rail infrastructure in Iowa.

I pushed hard for funding for months, ever since the House put its initial deposit down of \$2.65 billion in June. I am glad that the second disaster relief package is becoming a reality.

I also encourage the Bush administration to ensure that this disaster relief gets to Iowans and other affected individuals around the country as soon as possible. Only yesterday, after these tragedies occurred in May and June, did the initial installment of \$85 million of community development block grant funding get released from the \$300 million we approved in June. Three months is too long to wait when Iowans are struggling to recover as we speak. There are hundreds of millions of dollars remaining from our initial \$2.65 billion package, and the House is on the verge of passing billions more. The administration needs to get this money to the people who need it.

The recovery process in Iowa has been very challenging. The infrastructure demands are great. Cities like Aplington-Parkersburg lost their high school, Waverly-Shell Rock lost elementary schools. Wastewater treatment facilities throughout my district and necessary improvements to infrastructure are not being met.

This funding will provide critical assistance to people in need all over this country. I pledge to fight and continue these efforts to rebuild Iowa and other areas of the country until we finally achieve the victory of recovery.